

CHAPTER-4

PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS OF THE BATHOU RELIGION

4.1. Introduction

Philosophy is derived from two Greek words. These are 'Philos' and 'Sophia'. 'Philos' means 'love' and 'Sophia' means 'Wisdom'. It means "love of wisdom."¹ Cecero and Plato said philosophy is a way of living which is a principal of our lives. It is an art of life and principles of knowledge.

"The word religion comes from Latin word 'religio' which means 'to bind.'² There are so many opinions are given about the religion. For Alexander religion is belief of gods and goddesses. It is a "principle of unification and harmonization, which binds us all together in a wholesome way, is religion."³ Religions is an art of living of human beings through the right ways. It teaches us how to live our daily life in harmony within ourselves and with others. A religion leads our life of peace and delight.

Philosophy of religion is concerned as a philosophical thinking about religion. It is a religious experience. "God, faith, worship, prayer, tradition, revelation and immortality-are the determining factors of the religious experience."⁴ Philosophy and religion have most close connection with each other.

Every religion has its philosophical thought. Bathou religion of Bodo also has many religious philosophical thoughts. These philosophical thoughts of Bathou are controlling the Bodo society peacefully and systematically. Bathou religion has a unique traditional philosophical belief. The followers are follows this religion without any religious preachers from generation to generation from their ancestors.

4.2. Philosophical belief of Number Five

Bathou religion is philosophical connected with the number five. The word 'Bathou' is also connection with number five. This word is combined with two words one is 'Ba' and another one is 'thou'. 'Ba' means 'five' and 'thou' means 'deep' or 'Deep Thought'. That means 'five deep thought'. Bathou religion is based on five deep philosophies. Bodos are belief that from the first sounds of Bwrai-Bathou the air, water, fire, sky and earth are formed. These sounds are Ong, Hring, Khling, Phwt and

Se. When he utters the sound 'Ong' the 'air' is formed. When he utters 'Hring' the 'sky' is formed. The 'earth' is formed when Bwrai-Bathou utters the sound 'khling'. 'Water' is formed from the sound of 'phwt' and 'fire' is formed from the sound of 'Se'. Bihuram Boro also wrote his '*Gibi Bithai*' (1984), that combining of these five words Bathou is formed. These five words are the symbol of five supreme gods, Ailong, Agrang, Khwila, Sanja Bhoral and Rajkhandra. The Bathou altar also surrounded with five rows of bamboo. It is symbolizing the five philosophies of the Bathou and their belief.

The charms of the Bathou religion also chant by the Ozas are related with the number five.

"Aham de, Bwrai-Bathou moharaza

Khwnasong khwnasong

Angni bathraya khwnasong

Bathoua bandwba sijoua siriba

Thaigira khongba

Shipungni gudungabw gudungba

*Boroni raa phongba"*⁵

English Rendering

"Oh, Bwrai-Bathou Maharaza

Listen, listen

Listen to my words

Bathou have five-folded fence, Sijou have five ridges

Elephant apple have five rinds

Bodo flute also have five holds

Bodo have five moral preaching"

From this charm we can know that Bathou religion is really connected with number five. The followers are planted a Sijou plant at the centre of Bathou altar. It is the symbol of Bwrai-Bathou. The Bodo are belief that Sijou plant has two deep meanings. These are 'Si' and 'Jou'. 'Si' means 'Jiu' and 'Jio' means 'supreme'. That means Bwrai-Bathou is the supreme of all gods and goddesses. The Bathou followers are planted a Sijou plant as the symbol of supreme god or Bwrai-Bathou.

The Bathou religion followers are belief that Bwrai-Bathou is the creator of the world. The five rinds of Sijou plant also have deep philosophical meaning. It is related with five first creation of bar (air), ha (earth), ukhrang (sky), or (fire) and dwi (water). The pair thorn of Sijou plant represent with the marriage of male and female. The leaves of Sijou plant also have philosophical meaning for the followers. They represent it with a class of warriors (Baro-Birgwn). They were the Bodo mythological worriors reference as protectors against horrific events.

The five rinds of the elephant apple are compared with the five parts of the human body. These are head, neck, chest abdomen and foot. The rinds of elephant apple also use as an earthen pot at different seasonal festivals of the Bodo. It is also compared with hair, skin, flesh, veins and bonds of the human body. Human being is related with these five organs.

Siphung (flute) is a traditional musical instrument of the Bodo. The Bodo traditional instrument has five holes. This musical instrument is played during kherai festivals. They belief that the five sense organs of the human body is related with the flute's holes. The human senses organs are like touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste. It is also represented with the talking, crying, laughing, singing and shouting of the human body. The Bathou followers are belief that all these organs are related with the shipung.

'Bathouni bandwa mwnba' is represented with the five rows of bamboo. Bathou is surrounded with bamboo fences. There are eighteen pairs of bamboo post and five rows of bamboo at the Bathou altar. All posts and rows have different deep meanings. At the below given the philosophical meaning of those posts. It is related with the socio-life system of Bodos.

Row one is rounded inside face. The meaning of this row is that all creatures like human beings, animals and plants have to undergo the natural law of birth, growth and death. Nobody can escape from this natural law of god and all have to hug the mother earth after the death.

Row two is rounded upside face. The meaning of this step is that all creatures including human being are born in the earth. With the advice of Bathou-Bwrai, human beings can become parents of child through social system of marriage. No body can live by the character of heartlessness, untruthfulness and injustice.

Row three fences are rounded inside face. It is signifying that except human beings all creatures can become parents as they wish. But human being can become parent by following all the rules of religion. Row four is rounded upside face. It is related to an end of life or death of a person.

Row five is rounded inside face. This row is related to performance of funeral feast after death. There is a system of funeral feast which is performed for the departed soul for its eternal peace. There is a believed that a soul can rest peacefully in heaven if a funeral feast is performed after death.

4.3. The Five Preaching of Bathou

- (i) To worship Bwrai-Bathou.
- (ii) Conversing the religious matters and other spiritual matters.
- (iii) Love and affection for all.
- (iv) To solve the problems together.
- (v) To help the poor people.

4.4. Follow the Morals of Five Bodo Bwrai or Gurus (the Elders)

These are Aham guru, Mwn-sin-sin guru, Ana guru, Thena guru and Phwtse guru.

4.5. Social Customs also based on Number Five or Five Laws

To control the society they follow five moral laws which advised by the Guru Mwn-sin-sin. These five are called 'bad' in Bodo. If some person does offences in the society, he is treated as a guilty and is obliged to perform penance with some strict social customs. Traditionally the Bodo follows five bad systems. They are divided the offences into five categories. These are Agarbad, Phongslad bad, Daokhibad, Khaowali bad and Khoulobad bad.

4.6. Bathou Religion Followers Believe in Five Traditional Customs (Asharba) in their Life Circle

These are given below-

- (i) We should welcome the birth with some rituals.
- (ii) Sometimes in life we may get hurt, sorrow, but we should not become distressed.
- (iii) Sometimes in life we may get very happy but we should not forget to obey the Bwrai-Bathou.
- (iv) To marriage with the social system.
- (v) Everybody became old and die some day. There is a death funeral system among the Bodo.

4.7 There are Five Customary Rituals

These are given below-

- (i) Navel cutting ceremony.
- (ii) Hair cutting ceremony.
- (iii) Marriage ceremony.
- (iv) Observation of religious rules.
- (v) Death rituals.

4.8. The Religious Discourse

The Bodo religious discpuse are

- (i) To be truth minded

- (ii) To be purifying minded
- (iii) Not to be selfishness
- (iv) To be forgiver.
- (v) To be unities minded

4.9. The Holy Work to Do

- (i) To think about the Sijou plant as the supreme soul.
- (ii) To think about the connecting of human soul with Sijou plant.
- (iii) Be awareness of the Goddesses of prosperity.
- (iv) To think about the five elements of Bathou. These are air, water, earth, sun and fire.
- (v) To think about the duties on the earth without negligence.

4.10 The Five Sense of worship

- (i) Care for Bwrai Bathou
- (ii) Care for wife and children
- (iv) Care for fellow beings.
- (v) Care for others animals and nature.
- (vi) Care for earth.

4.11. Hatred for the Antisocial Activities

Bodo people are following this five hatred from generation to generation. They thought that these are the advice of Bwrai Bathou. These five hatred are-

- (i) Hatred to all indulgent in illegal sexual relation.
- (ii) Hatred to killing of every innocent human being, animals and anything.
- (iii) Hatred for cheating personality.
- (iv) Hatred for the robber character.
- (v) Hatred for guilty person of offences.

The tune of traditional flute is five, these are sa, re, ga, pha, and dha. The beating tune of kham has five, this are bring, bring, bring, thagwm, bring. The counting system of the Bodo is five. These are se, nwi, tham, brwi and ba. The uses of plants during the worship are also five, tulunshi, Zatrashi, khashihagra, dubrihagra and banana tree. The first charm of the prayer is five. These are ong, hring, khling, phwt, se.

The Bodo also follow the five gurus, Goshai guru, Mwdai guru, Bima guru, Bipha guru and Dhikha guru. The first creation of Bwrai-Bathou is also five. These are earth, air, water, sun and sky. All this five integrity are the philosophical thought of the Bathou.

There is a philosophical thought about this charm which is chanted by the Ozas.

“Rang rashi,

Gwhw rashi

Mwitha haji,

Saseanw satham

Phanseanw phantham

Bari gongtham”.⁶

English Rendering

“Rang Rashi, Gwhw Rashi and Mwitha Haji

They are the strong three gods

The power of god can be counted in three

Names are separately

As creation, preservation and destruction

But they are one in three and three in one”

Barigongtham means happy, sorrow and dead of all human beings are up to the hands of God. That means Bodo people believe only one supreme God Bwrai-Bathou. He is the creator of the universe and he is the protector and desolator of all the living beings. To maintain the univers peacefully and systematically the Bwrai Bathou takes three forms. These are Rangrashi, Mwithahaji and Barigongtham (Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswar in Hinduism). Bodo also believe that there is only one God of the universe. The Bathou religion teaches to worship the Bwrai-Bathou. It is teach about affection, selfishness, about how to stay purity and helping each other in the society.

1.12 Summing Up

From the above discussion it is found the philosophical aspects of Bathou. In this chapter, discussions have been made on the five deep meaning of Bathou. The disciple of Bathou is close connection with number five. Besides of these, discussions have been made about five preaching of Bathou, five laws and traditional customs of the life circle. In this chapter, customary rituals, religious discourse, the work to do, five woeship and hatred for antisocial activities are also discussions. Every religion has its philosophical thought. Bathou religion also has deep philosophical thought.

That is why A.R. Mohapatra writes on his book '*Philosophy of the Religion*' (1990) that religion is a principle of unification and it is bringing together. Which is binds us all together in a hearty manner.

The name of Bathou has also deep meaning and combined with two different words 'Ba' and 'Thou'. The philosophical thought of the Bathou is controlling the Bodo society from generation to generation. The philosophy of Bathou is an art of life and way of living of the Bodo people.

So, Plato said that philosophy of religion is a way of living. Bathou followers are also belief only one supreme god which name is Bwrai-Bathou.

Endnotes

1. Mohapatra, A.R., 1990, *Philosophy of the Religion*, Second edition & Enlarged Edition, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, p. 1.
2. Ibid, p. 5.
3. Ibid, p. 5
4. Ibid, p. 9.
5. Brahma, Binay Kr, 2011, *Boroni Fwrbw*, N.L. Publications, Kokrajhar, p. 53.
6. Bathou Publication Board, Drrang, 1994, *Gwthar Mwikhun*, Bathou Publication Board Hahisinga, Drrang, p. 8.